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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

Risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Identical letters dated 19 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to draw attention to the public admission of Israeli clandestine development and unlawful possession of nuclear weapons made by the Israeli regime's Prime Minister in an interview broadcast on a German television network on 12 December 2006.

The inaction imposed on the Security Council over the past several decades in addressing the well-documented illicit nuclear weapons programme by the Israeli regime has given the audacity to its Prime Minister not only to explicitly acknowledge possession of nuclear weapons but even to publicly boast, in the above-mentioned interview, about its dangerous nuclear weapons.

It is indisputable that nuclear weapons in the hands of a regime with an unparalleled record of non-compliance with Security Council resolutions and a long and dark catalogue of crimes and atrocities, such as occupation, aggression, militarism, state terrorism and crimes against humanity, poses a uniquely grave threat to regional as well as international peace and security.

The Israeli regime, as the only obstacle for the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free-zone in the Middle East, has constantly and obstinately disregarded international demands and concerns repeatedly raised about its clandestine nuclear weapons programme in different forums, in particular in the review conference of the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which have by name called upon the regime to accede to the Treaty immediately and without any condition.

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Moreover, the Israeli regime's clandestine development and possession of nuclear weapons not only violate basic principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, as well as numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, but also clearly defy the demand of the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations that have, time and again, called on the regime to renounce nuclear weapons and accede to the Treaty.

In this regard, as recently as in September 2006, the Heads of State or Government of 118 members of the Non-Aligned Movement urged the Israeli regime "to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, to accede to the Treaty without delay, to place promptly all its nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency according to Security Council resolution 487 (1981) and to conduct its nuclear-related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime". The Non-Aligned Movement members also "expressed great concern over the acquisition of the nuclear capability by Israel, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and stockpile nuclear arsenals". The same demands have been also constantly made by the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In view of the above, the Security Council should fulfil its Charter-based responsibility to address such a clear and serious threat to international peace and security and take prompt and appropriate actions accordingly. The Council should, inter alia, condemn the Israeli regime's clandestine development and possession of nuclear weapons, compel it to abandon nuclear weapons, urge it to accede to the Treaty without delay and demand that the regime promptly place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA full-scope safeguards. Should the Israeli regime fail to do so, the Council must take resolute action under Chapter VII of the Charter to ensure compliance.

The reversal of the hypocritical policy of "strategic ambiguity" by the Israeli regime has removed any excuse — if there ever was any — for continued inaction by the Council in the face of this actual threat to international peace and security. The reaction of the Security Council will show whether the Council is acting, as obliged under Article 24 of the Charter, on behalf of the members of the international community that have made their views abundantly clear on this issue or whether it is merely a tool for a few permanent members that have made no secret of their policy to allow and even encourage the Israeli regime to persist in its lawless behaviour with impunity.

Peace and stability cannot be achieved in the Middle East while the massive Israeli nuclear arsenal continues to threaten the region and beyond.

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13, 81, 87 and 93, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) M. Javad **Zarif**